

Managing the water crisis: A youth perspective

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The youth are identified as a key group to include in effective engagement and decision-making for water security and sustainable development. An increase in severe droughts in Namibia has highlighted its destructive impacts and led to a growing concern about the societal exposure of communities. Acknowledging the benefit of access to safe drinking water to humanity, in reality a disproportionate burden of protecting environmental benefits such as clean water is borne by the poor and vulnerable sections of the society.

As a result, a key consideration highlighted in the Hyogo and Sendai Frameworks is the inclusion of gender & age perspectives, and vulnerable groups in planning for disaster risk reduction. Therefore, the paper argues that empowering the youth with knowledge and skills capability in disaster risk issues becomes essential for a sustainable management approach, and a potential 'rescue' mechanism from the web of poverty. The paper also illustrates that there is indeed weak adherence to good governance and that the government needs to improve structures for youth coordination to ensure water stewardship. Realizing this gap in knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of resilience at all levels of society, the paper offers a perspective on the role of youth in the development agenda of Namibia and how they can influence decision-making processes in addressing water insecurity in the country.

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